

Literature. &c.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

AN OLD, BUT GOOD POEM.

Who shall judge a man from manners?
Who shall know him by his dress?
Paupers may be fit for princes,
Princes fit for something less.
Crumpled shirt and dirty jacket
May beclothe the golden ore,
Of the deepest thoughts and feelings—
Satin vests could do no more.
There are springs of crystal nectar
Ever welling out of stone;
There are purple buds and golden,
Hidden, crushed and over-grown;
God, who counts by souls, not dresses,
Loves and prospers you and me,
While he values thrones, the highest,
But as pebbles in the sea.

Man upraised against his fellows,
Oft forgets his fellows then;
Masters—rulers—lords remember
That your meanest hind is a man—
Men by labor, men by feeling,
Men by thought and men by fame,
Claiming equal rights to sunshine
In a man's ennobling name.
There are foam-embroidered oceans,
There are little weed-clad rills,
There are feeble inch-high saplings,
There are cedars on the hills;
God, who counts by souls, not stations,
Loves and prospers you and me;
For to him all vain distinctions
Are as pebbles in the sea.

Toiling hands alone are builders
Of a nation's wealth or fame;
Titled laziness is pensioned,
Fed and fattened on the same;
By the sweat of other's foreheads,
Living only to rejoice,
While the poor man's outraged freedom
Vainly lifteth up his voice.
Truth and justice are eternal,
Born with loveliness and light;
Secret wrongs shall never prosper
While there is a sunny right.
God, whose world-heard voice is singing
Boundless love to you and me,
Sings oppression with its titles.
As the pebbles of the sea.

From the Dublin University Magazine.

SULTAN AKBAR'S LOVE,
OR, THE SIEGE OF CHITTORE.

A Tale from Oriental History.

IN the country of Rajpootana, on a stony plain at the foot of a steep mountain, stands the old Hindoo City of Chittore, now much dilapidated; but at the period of which we write (sixteenth century) it was the capital of the Rajah, or more properly the Ranah, or Mewar. The city had its bazaar; its showy pagodas rising above the mass of heavy looking-houses; its walls and narrow gates; its handsome bridge, with a tower at each end, spanning the clear stream of the River Bunnass; and its deep boolee, or well with ever bright and unpolluted waters.

The mountain that rises immediately above the city, part bare and rocky, part covered with patches of grass, scattered trees, and thick bushes, was (and still is) crowned by a strong and extensive fortress, with walls winding along the irregularities of the summit, and strengthened at intervals by semi-circular bastions; and containing, in fact, another town, with streets and temples, and the palace of the Ranah and his family. A silvery rill springing from a rock within the fortress, fell in a cascade, sparkling and foaming over a precipitous part of the crags and then wound its way down the mountain, to reach the region below.

It was daybreak. The mountain and the lower town were alive with a mighty army, the troops of the Mogul, encamped there to blockade the fortress above. In the lower town was the rear-guard, with all its baggage, and beasts of burden, and accompanying rabble. There might be seen the turbaned and full-robed Mussulman soldiers, mingling with the slender Hindoos, with the streak designating their castes marked on the forehead; war-horses picketed; camels lying down; shaggy Indian ponies straggling about; and a few majestic looking elephants drinking at the river, attended by their drivers. And glittering in the morning light, in many parts of the city, shone the Mahomed crescent, the ensign of that invading power, which, from the days of Tamerlane, had seated itself on the throne of Delhi, and had subdued so many of the native princes of Upper India.

At about the distance of half a coss (about a mile) from the city, along the mountain, was pitched the Mogul camp, extending upwards for a considerable space; and the communication between it and the city was preserved by a chain of sentinels and detached guards. The Mogul army had evidently invested the mountain-fortress with a strict blockade, but at this time there was no appearance of active siege.—All was quiet, and the Mussulman camp itself was decorated with such extraordinary splendour and costliness, that it seemed as prepared for some great festival, and not for warlike pur-

poses. The humblest of tents were of gaudy chintzes; those of the omrahs, emirs, officers, &c., were magnificent in proportion to their ranks, some of bright silks, others richly brocaded with gold or silver. The tent-ropes were of twisted silk, the tent-pins of silver, and numerous glittering banners and gilded crescents shone in the rising sunbeams. On a grassy spot, beside the falling stream, and shaded by a peepul tree, stood one large tent, which was at once perceived to be that of the Grand Mogul, by its superior gorgeousness, and by the devices on the banners planted round it. It was of the richest gold brocade, adorned with arabesques, traced in countless small gems of various colours, giving out their rainbow gleamings to the light. The tent-pins were of gold, with jewelled heads, the tent-ropes of golden cords twined together, and above this magnificent pavilion shone a crescent set with emeralds. Among the brilliant banners floating round, the most conspicuous was the ensign called *mahi muratib*, or the dignity of the fish, being the emblem of good fortune. On a gilded pole was displayed a large fish, made of almon coloured silk; the eyes were emeralds; the hollow body ended in a tail of golden tassels; the golden jaws were open, and the air entering into them, inflated the body, which wavered about like a fish floating in clear waters.

When the eye turned away from the wondrous camp to the dark stern fortress above, it discovered on the walls the dusky figures of the Hindoo soldiers, in their snow white cotton dresses; the points of their weapons, and the bosses of their shields, gleaming as they moved slowly at their posts.

There was at length a movement in the Mogul's camp; the soldiers issued from their tents and formed in their respective troops, under sumptuously-appeared officers. In a few minutes the Great Mogul himself appeared, the Sultan Akbar, famed for his magnificence, his talents, and his victories. He was in the prime of life, a prince of noble presence, with a clear brown complexion, raven-black beard and whiskers, and a face of much masculine beauty.—His dress was of cloth of gold; a shawl of the sacred green was folded round his waist, and held his jewelled dagger. His turban of green silk, ribbed with gold, was surmounted by a crescent and plume of diamonds; the handle and sheath of his scimitar were encrusted with gems; round his throat was a triple collar of diamonds; and a long string of matchless pearls hung down from his neck below his waist. He carried a rich bow, and a gilded arrow without a head. On the unbarbed end of the arrow was fastened a natural rose, with a chain of diamonds, and a slip of white silk inscribed with verses. He mounted a beautiful black horse, with housings of crimson velvet, tasselled with small jewels, and placed himself at the head of his glittering army; then all the troops, cavalry and infantry, marched forward, advancing up towards the fortress.

And now the Hindoo soldiers on the ramparts appeared alert to watch the proceedings of the Moslems, and to act vigorously on the defensive if attacked. A tall slender figure, wearing a red rajpoot lurban, with a shining badge, or ornament, round his neck, stood conspicuous among them, and was easily guessed, even at a distance, from his majestic air, to be the Ranah of Mewar, the sovereign of Chittore.

The Mogul army halted within bow-shot of the walls; the trumpeters raised silver trumpets to their lips, and sounded—not a point of war, but a tender and amorous-toned melody, which was echoed from every crag and every hollow of the mountain. When the strain had ceased, the troops formed into line. Each man was armed with a bow and one gilded arrow, fledged with gaily coloured feathers. The arrows were all without barbs, but had attached to the top some one beautiful, natural flower, with a slip of white silk, on which a short poem was written. The Sultan raised his bow, and shot his rose-headed dart over the walls of the fortress. His example was immediately followed by all his troops, and the air was filled with a variegated flying cloud of flowers of every hue, with their silken pennants fluttering; and as it fell in a fragrant shower within the fortress, the noblest among the Mogul's omrahs, rode up to the closed gate, and proclaimed in a loud voice—'Honor to Padmani, the most beautiful, most beloved princess! May she smile on the homage of Akbar the Great, the most magnificent of monarchs, but her humblest slave.'

The Hindoos on the ramparts answered with a loud and insulting shout of derision, and immediately hurled back again over the walls the flower-laden arrows. The haughty Moslems seemed insensible to the insult; and, with true Mahometan gravity, formed into marching order, and returned to their camp. There all the military duties were regularly performed, with every demonstration of maintaining a rigorous blockade. For notwithstanding all the display of courtesy towards the fortress, the Mogul had invested it so closely that no human being could issue from it unchallenged by the beleaguers.

The siege of Chittore, like that of Troy, had been caused by a woman's charms. Not like the Trojan siege, however to restore an erring wife to her husband; but on the contrary, to allure (if possible) a wife from her husband—to

induce the beautiful Princess of Mewar to exchange the palace of the Ranah for the harem of the Mogul.

The Rajah, or rather Ranah, of Mewar, was of that proud rajpoot caste that called itself *Suryasvanti*, or Children of the sun; boasting its descent from *Surya*, the Indian Apollo, and reckoning among its mortal ancestry, *Porus*, who so bravely resisted the arms of Alexander the Great. The royal race of Mewar was too haughty to ally itself with any of mere earthly lineage, and intermarried, therefore, only with its own kindred. The reigning Ranah had espoused his cousin *Padmani*—a princess of such surpassing beauty and endowments, that she was the favorite theme of the *Bhats* (or bards of the rajpoots), who wandered about Upper India, singing the praises of their gods, the valor of their heroes, and the charms of their women. Some of these bards had visited Delhi, and had sung before the Emperor Akbar, and their descriptions of *Padmani* had awakened in his excitable Oriental heart, a violent passion for the beautiful Hindoo.

Stimulated by curiosity and heated fancy, he inquired concerning her from all who had seen her, or heard of her; and the reiterated praises of her rare loveliness which filled, but never wearied his ear, enslaved him to the charms of the unseen Princess. He said to himself;—'to whom should the most beautiful of princesses belong but to the greatest of monarchs! A gem is wanting in the crown of Akbar, while you Indian unbeliever keeps in his own paltry circlet the brightest diadem of the East.' And with a Mahometan contempt for the feelings of a man of another creed, the haughty Sultan wrote to the Ranah, soliciting him to separate from his wife and yield her to Akbar; offering to the Hindoo Prince in return the hand of a lovely relation of the Mogul, together with a vast treasure and a large accession of territories. The Sultan, at the same time, addressed letters to *Padmani*, offering his hand, and the throne of Delhi, with undying love, and all imaginable wealth and power; and gently reproaching her with injustice to her own beauty, in sharing the musnud of a petty prince while the first throne in Asia awaited her.

The joint reply of the Ranah was haughty and determined. They loved each other too well to weigh ambition or wealth against affection; they scorned as an insult the offer of alliance with Akbar, as a man far inferior to the Children of the Sun; and reminded the Mogul it was the law of honor among the rajpoots that their women should die rather than fall into the alien.

Stung with rage, Akbar wrote again, but in a different tone. He threatened the destruction of Chittore and all the *Suryasvanta*, and reminded the Ranah of the irresistible progress of his mighty arms in India. The only reply of the Hindoo was a contemptuous defiance.

Indignation prompted the Sultan to march against Chittore, but his ardent love (so he termed his insane passion) made him pause ere he attacked that royal fortress with the weapons of war. He feared for the consequences to the Rannee, the beautiful *Padmani*. He knew that the rajpoots were not only a brave and chivalrous, but also a ferocious people. They worshipped *Siva* the Destroyer and his cruel consort *Kali*, who according to their dark creed, delighted in human sacrifices. To avert the danger of their women falling into captivity, a mortal disgrace to their nation, they would plunge their daggers into the fairest and fondest bosoms, though their own hearts should burst with anguish. And in impending calamities the rajpoot females often devoted themselves to death, to propitiate their stern and cruel gods by the performance of the *Joar*, a self-sacrifice by suffocation. If the Mogul arms shook Chittore, what might be the fate of the lovely Rannee amid such fearful superstitions?

The Sultan then resolved, ere he made a final appeal to arms, on attempting to influence the fair Rannee in his favor, by exalting her imagination (for thus are women often won). He thought to attract her by the mingling of ambition and romance, and to dazzle her by his incomparable magnificence. Hence all the gorgeousness of his camp, all the extravagance of his ministry courtship. Bands of men were constantly employed in collecting the emblem flowers, which with their accompanying amatory verses (the labors of countless poets and transcribers), were daily shot into the fortress, as we have seen, in the wild hope that some of them, at least, would meet the eye of *Padmani*; that the flattering tale of his magnificent wooing would reach her ears. And though his floral homage was daily hurled back by orders of the offended Princess, still Akbar had persisted for nearly a month in his strange but costly siege trusting in female curiosity and female vanity.

The Mogul was reclining in the door of his tent, shaded by the peepul-tree in deep consultation with his friend and confidant, the Sheikh *Soliman*, who sat on the ground before him—a ruddy visaged, keen eyed old man, in a plain green turban; his hands drawn back into the ample sleeves of his coarse brown woollen garment, for he was a devotee.

'Soliman, my hopes begin to flag; my homage avails not—the beautiful Indian is unmoved. By thine eyes! canst thou not devise some expedient before I am forced to

bar the scimitar in wrath, and to endanger the life of my soul's sultana by the horrible superstitions of her race?'

'Let the Asylum of the Universe no longer waste time and treasures on the thankless daughter of the infidels. Forget her my Sultan; as fair can be found to share the throne of Delhi.'

'Earth holds none so worthy of my throne as *Padmani*. Do not all agree in her perfections? Say they not that she is beautiful as an houri, graceful as the twining liana, light-footed as the antelope, gentle as the dove, wise as *Lokman*, good as the daughter of *Imran*; with a voice sweet as that of the angel *Israfil*, and a smile like the ripple in the river of Paradise? She is a priceless gem, and my crown is imperfect without her.'

'Draw then the invincible scimitar. Take the fortress, slay the Ranah—his spoils will be thine.'

'But not his widow! Madness, Sheikh!—Knowest thou not, that to slay the Ranah is to slay my love? She would be compelled by her religion to sacrifice herself upon her husband's burning funeral pile.'

The Sheikh mused for a time with his eyes fixed on the ground, while Akbar gazed anxiously upon him. After a silence of some minutes *Soliman* looked up.

'If thy condescension would hear me without anger, I would say, let the Sultan prepare to leave Chittore.'

Akbar stared angrily at the speaker. 'Leave Chittore like a baffled hound! give the infidel leave to say, ha! the face of the Sultan is blackened, we laugh at his beard! By thy head, O Sheikh! I scorn such counsel.'

'Yet my Sultan,' resumed the old man quietly, 'I still counsel thee to proclaim that thou dost yield up the siege. Also demand graciously a farewell meeting with your idolatrous prince; and I would pray thee to present to him, as a parting gift of reconciliation that string of matchless pearls that hangs round thy tower-like neck.'

Akbar's rage would have burst forth with vehemence, but for a peculiar smile on the Sheikh's countenance, which told that he meant more than he expressed. The old man continued—

'But I fear the string is scarcely strong enough for its purpose. It might break on the Ranah's neck, and some of the pearls be lost. With the Sultan's leave I would crave to show how such valuable pearls ought to be strung, so that the string shall run no risk of breaking.'

The Sultan observed the emphasis of the Sheikh on the last words.

'Come into my tent O Sheikh, in the name of the Prophet, and turn jeweller if thou wilt.—And while thou art stringing my pearls anew, explain the secret of thy unwonted counsels.'

So Spake Akbar, hurrying *Soliman* into the royal tent, and closing the entrance, after commanding the sentinel to prohibit the approach of any intruder whatever.

Within the mountain fortress of Chittore was a small lake, covered with the leaves and flowers of the blue water-lotos, and its centre, on a rocky islet, stood the palace of the Rannee *Padmani*, a low, heavy stone building, adorned with a lot of mythological sculpture. The communication with the mainland was maintained by means of two decorated boats. In the favorite apartment of *Padmani*, the small windows were set round with a frame of shining mica; the smoothly plastered walls and ceiling were painted with subjects from the most agreeable Hindoo legends. There was *Cama* the Indian Cupid with his bow of sugar-cane, and its string of bees, and his five arrows tipped with flowers, accompanied by his consort *Reti* (affection), and his friend *Vasanta* (the spring). There was *Nareda*, son of the god *Brahma*, inventing the vina, or Indian guitar; and *Parvati*, in the guise of a mountain girl, winning back the estranged affections of her consort the god *Isvara*. The floor was covered with striped cotton, lined and quilted, so that the foot-thread, fell noiseless; cushions of brocade were laid upon it, and two musnud covered with rich shawls. In a niche stood a silver idol of *Surya*, or the sun before which lay, as a votive offering, a garland of mougrees, purely white fragrant flowers, resembling jessamine.—The room was cool and darkened; and wetted mats, of an odoriferous grass, were laid wherever the rays of the sun sought to penetrate.

On a pile of cushions sat *Padmani*. Her under robe was of white silk; the upper, of silver gauze. A chaplet of emerald leaves and pearl berries bound the luxuriant knot of her shining black hair, and splendid ornaments encircled her slender arms, waist, and ankles. Her figure was the perfection of symmetry and grace; and her face was so exquisitely beautiful as to surpass even the imaginings of Sultan Akbar. She held a vina, or Indian guitar, whose melancholy music she accompanied with a voice of infinite sweetness, but of deep sadness, often interrupted by tears.

PADMANI'S SONG.

Who will be with thee at the rest of Even
(Those sacred hours, so tranquil and so lone)
Gazing with thee upon the dark'ning heaven,
Breathing soft thoughts by tender impulse
given,
When I am gone!